



ASGS Edition 4 Consultation

Closed 1 Sep 2024

Opened 29 May 2024

Contact

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Feedback updated 31 Jul 2025

We asked

In preparation for the [Australian Statistical Geography Standard](#) (ASGS) Edition 4 due to be released in 2026, the ABS has been consulting with stakeholders to ensure this framework is still meeting user needs. Between May and September 2024, we invited all stakeholders to contribute their views and provide feedback on the ASGS.

You said

A total of 96 submissions were submitted with feedback received from all levels of government, commercial organisations, non-government agencies, academics and individuals.

A summary of feedback is presented below:

Main Structure

82% of respondents rated the Main Structure as either very suitable or suitable with only 5% of respondents rating the Main Structure as either unsuitable or very unsuitable. Some respondents noted that specific geographies within the structure were exceeding their population design criteria.

71% of respondents who reported using Greater Capital City Statistical Areas

(GCCSA) rated the geography as either very suitable or suitable with 8% rating GCCSA as unsuitable or very unsuitable.

Majority of respondents were supportive of minimal change to Statistical Area Level 3, Statistical Area Level 4 and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas geographies for ASGS Edition 4 (2026) and were supportive of reviewing those geographies ahead of ASGS Edition 5 (2031). Respondents noted that population growth and change needed to be addressed, as well as balancing the impacts of change on time series for these geographies. Respondents recommended communicating any proposed changes early and the need for support to manage changes through the provision of correspondences. Better alignment of these geographies to administrative regions were flagged for consideration as part of any review.

Indigenous Structure

58% of respondents who used the Indigenous Structure found it fit for purpose, while 6.5% of respondents found the structure unsuitable or very unsuitable. Respondents noted that Indigenous Locations may contain more than one community which was viewed as an issue. It was also suggested to name communities after language groups.

Respondents suggested for future editions of the ASGS, consideration to be given for inclusion of the following geographies: first nations and language groups, native title, and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies map.

Urban Centres and Localities

79% of respondents were supportive of adopting Mesh Blocks as the building block geography for Urban Centres and Localities for ASGS Edition 4 (2026). Some respondents noted concerns about time series and impacts of design on Significant Urban Areas in some locations.

Additional issues raised included the naming convention for 'Rural Residential' which could be confused with land planning zones, and the State/Territory aggregated based rural residential definition limited the ability to analyse specific rural residential community locations. It was also suggested that specific rural residential community locations should take on the name of nearby Urban Centres and Localities. Other issues raised included data availability for Mesh Block built Urban Centres and Localities.

Remoteness Structure

Over 70% of respondents who used Remoteness Areas found them to be fit for purpose. Some of the concerns raised included the lack of recognition for seasonal access to remote communities in the calculation of remoteness and

the need for more distinction within existing remoteness categories.

There were mixed responses to our proposal of a review of the structure for ASGS Edition 5 (2031). Some suggested improvements and the need for revision while others stressed the importance of keeping it unchanged. Most concerns raised about a review of Remoteness Structure included impact on time series, more information required on methodology and data sources, concern that the classification could be removed from the structure, and how future change may impact organisations that use Remoteness Areas.

Non ABS Structure

A majority of respondents, 91%, had no significant concerns with removing Tourism Regions from the Non ABS Structure for Edition 4 (2026), provided correspondences to mathematically convert data to and from Tourism Regions were published. Some concerns were raised if Tourism Regions were no longer defined by any organisation as well as concerns around education on how the geography relates to other ASGS structures if removed from the classification.

90% of respondents had no significant concerns with removing Australian Drainage Divisions from the Non ABS Structure for Edition 4 (2026). Some concerns were raised if removed from the ASGS, due to the use of Australian Drainage Divisions in local planning activities.

A number of other administrative boundaries were suggested for inclusion in the Non ABS structure of the ASGS. These suggestions were able to be grouped under the themes of health, environment and government. Examples include:

- Primary Health Networks
- Local Health Networks
- Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics broadacre zones and regions
- Council Wards/Divisions

Alignment to cadastre

The majority of respondents did not raise concerns about updating the alignment of the ASGS to cadastre (the geographic representation of parcels) for Edition 4 (2026), and our assessment that it would have almost no impact on geocoding at the Mesh Block level. Respondents were supportive on realignment in cases where it would affect ABS approximations of administrative boundaries including suburbs and Local Government Areas.

We did

We reviewed stakeholder submissions and conducted follow-up meetings with those who requested further discussions. We used these insights to inform decisions for the design of ASGS Edition 4 (2026).

These decisions are available in the [Outcome from the review of the Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\)](#) publication which includes:

- Planned changes between ASGS Edition 3 (2021) and Edition 4 (2026)
- A provisional ASGS Edition 4 diagram
- Proposed release schedule of ASGS Edition 4
- Future plans for ASGS Edition 5 (2031)

We encourage stakeholders to begin planning for ASGS Edition 4 which will be progressively released from July 2026.

Please email geography@abs.gov.au with any questions or for further information.

Overview

This questionnaire asks for your feedback on the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS). The ASGS is a classification of Australia into a hierarchy of statistical areas developed for the release and analysis of statistics and other data. The ASGS is updated every 5 years to account for growth and change in Australia's population, economy, and infrastructure. The most recent publication of the [ASGS is Edition 3](#) which was created to facilitate the release of the 2021 Census. [ABS Maps](#) offers a visual representation of all ASGS Edition 3 statistical areas.

Why your views matter

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) values your feedback. It helps us make changes that ensure our statistical releases deliver high quality and timely data. This questionnaire asks about your use of the ASGS, what you like and dislike about it, and any suggestions on how the ASGS could be improved. The ABS will use your feedback to inform future ASGS design decisions, with a focus on the updates required for ASGS Edition 4 which will facilitate the release of the 2026 Census.

If any of the questions in this questionnaire are not relevant to your use of the ASGS, or you would prefer to not answer, please select 'Not Applicable'.

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